

# AGRICULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN MOROCCO AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

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## Abstract:

The relations between Morocco and the European Union rotate, especially from the Moroccan side, around one single desire: The creation of a Free Trade Zone (FTZ). From the first EU-Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement (1996) until the new Agreement on Agriculture (2010), through the granting of Advanced Status to Morocco (2008), most agricultural and industrial products enjoyed certain privileges, financial advantages and finally their practical liberalisation on the EU market.

This research will focus on the analytical study of the Institutional Framework to develop relations between the EU and Morocco on agriculture. In this sense, we will analyze: Firstly, the legal framework that legally and politically regulates these relations, i.e. the Treaty on European Union (1992) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004); secondly, the agreements that have had the greatest impact on agricultural development in Morocco.

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**Key Words:** Moroccan Agriculture, Treaty on European Union, European Neighbourhood Policy, Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, Agreement on Agriculture.

## Introduction

The agricultural activity of any region, though rooted in the customs and most genuine knowledge of their culture, depends on more global behaviours, both regarding its technological, political and economic management. Morocco, like any other country that seeks to evolve agronomically, is not an exception. In fact, mainly due to its strategic geographic location and the nature of its socioeconomic structure, its agricultural activity develops in a complex network of political, diplomatic and economic relations. Europe constitutes a main, crucial relation with Morocco, without which the Moroccan production would be practically marginal.

In the present paper we intend to provide a synoptic vision of all the relations the Alaouite kingdom has established with Europe on agricultural development, since its political independence from the Spanish-French Protectorate (1956) until the present. We will try, as well, to contextualise them in the geographic and economic peculiarities of the Moroccan agricultural sector.

Morocco is a preferred partner of the EU. This recognition was granted by the EU Council in a document known as Advanced Status (2008), which was signed by both parties after a long and intense political and diplomatic effort that was made prior to the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement between the EU and Morocco of 1996. The idea that has been pursued since then is to create a Free Trade Area between the EU and Morocco for agricultural and industrial products, as well as to test aspects of European International Policy. These and other concerns would result in the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004): New policy framework and, at the same time, the establishment of all the relationships between the EU and Mediterranean partner countries.

Precisely within this new political and diplomatic framework, with its legal basis in *The Treaty of European Union*<sup>196</sup> (Maastricht, 1992), all action plans that would affect the subsequent boost for the Moroccan agriculture would be designed and approved. The idea and the desire of the Moroccan government were to project total liberalization of agricultural products. This intention, although widely criticized by many of the producers of southern Communities, is gradually being

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<sup>196</sup>In this research, the consolidated version of the EU Treaty (Maastricht, 1992) is taken as reference, published in the *Official Journal of the European Union* on December 29, 2006, which introduces amendments to the Treaty of Athens, signed on April 16, 2003.

materialized, agreement after agreement. Actually, the new Morocco-EU Agricultural Agreement (2010), which came into force on the 1st of October, 2012, involves practical liberalization of fruit and vegetable exports from Morocco to EU markets. This is one clear example of the achievements in foreign policy obtained by the Kingdom of Morocco, which will be explained in more detail later on in this paper.

### **General Framework Of The Relations Between The Eu And Morocco-Eu**

#### **The Legal Foundation of relations between the EU and Morocco: The EU Treaty**

Relations between Morocco and the European Union were intensified since the beginning of Mohammed the Fifth's reign (1999); marked mainly due to the collaboration and cooperation. Morocco has therefore managed to be at the top of the list of members who benefit from the financial support of the European Union. It is a pioneer in the European Neighbourhood Policy (later to be explained) and also participates in the integration of the single market on the basis of the gradual adoption of the acquit and the Community border cooperation. Morocco, in short, was defined by the European Union as a "privileged partner" in the Advanced Status granted in October 2008, which plans to expand the framework of bilateral, diplomatic and commercial relations between the two of them, as well as greater political dialogue, human and cultural exchanges, trade liberalization, a general approach for the Moroccan economy to get to the standards of the European internal market (Kausch, 2010: 2).

Although it is true that the relations between the Alaouite kingdom and the European Union began a few years after its political independence from the Spanish-French Protectorate (1956), thirteen years later the first partnership agreement between the two parties was signed, which was binding for a period of five years. It was replaced shortly afterwards by a global cooperation agreement signed on April 27, 1976, which proposed a not quite so reciprocal preferential basis: "Morocco practically did not give any concessions to the EU, while the community totally eliminated the rights and barriers to Moroccan industrial products at the time that major concessions on agricultural products were made"<sup>197</sup> (Moreno García, 2000: 9).

In any case, a new horizon for trade relations between Morocco and the EU would open with the signing of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement in 1996 between the European Union and Morocco, which was legally binding on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2000. This will need to be explained in further detail throughout the paper.

So far it is necessary, despite the anachronism, to approach the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) of 2004 in a synoptic way, which contains the fundamental political principles that regulate such relations and consequently go back to the EU Treaty, in its consolidated version of 2006, the legal basis of the previous one.

The Fifth Chapter of The European Union Treaty articulates and regulates the Common European Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) between articles 11-28. The Union Council is the legislative body responsible for defining the principles and general guidelines for the CFSP, taking the necessary decisions thereon (article 13). However, the Union Presidency shall represent the EU's foreign and security policy, expressing the Union's position in international organizations and international conferences, with the assistance of the Council's General Secretary who will exercise the functions of High Representative of the Foreign and Security Policy (article 18). At the same time, the Presidency and the Commission shall consult the European Parliament concerning the main aspects and the basic options of the common, foreign and security policy, celebrating a debate on the progress made in CFSP every year (art. 21). Article 27 underlines the legal basis of its relations of cooperation, which in due respect has come forth with: a) The principles, objectives, general guidelines and consistency of the common foreign and security policy, and the decisions taken within the framework of this policy, b) The competences of the European Community and c) The consistency between all the Union's policies and its external activities.

It should be noted that the foreign trade and the international agreements are regulated in the Constitutive Treaty of the European Community (2006), especially in Articles 133 and 300. In the third paragraph of Article 133 it is stated that agreements would need to be negotiated with one or more States or international organizations: "The Commission shall make recommendations to the Council, which shall authorize it to open the necessary negotiations. Also, the Board and the

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<sup>197</sup> The translation is mine.

Commission will be entitled to ensure that the negotiated agreements are compatible with internal policies and regulations of the Community. The Commission shall conduct these negotiations in consultation with a special committee appointed by the Council to assist in this task and within the framework of such directives as the Council may issue it; at last the Commission will report regularly to the special committee on the progress of the negotiations”. It shall apply to this article, finally, the relevant provisions of article 300 relating to agreements between the Community and one or more States or international organizations.

#### **Political and instrumental framework of the relations between the EU-and Morocco: The European Neighbourhood Policy (2004)**

Inspired and legally regulated by The Treaty of European Union (Maastricht, 1992), in the first decade of the new millennium started developing what we know today as the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), ultimately communicated by the Commission in Brussels on 12<sup>th</sup> of May, 2004. However, already in the run up to the great expansion of 2005, which contributed to 10 new EU member states, was generally recognized that this extension would have significant implications for countries on the other side of the new borders of the European Union, mainly to the east. They argued that it should prevent or mitigate the negative effects and take advantage of the potential for developing mutually beneficial cooperation with the new neighbours. This is when the famous debate about the initiative of a “Wider Europe. A New Neighbourhood” starts.

The general character of the new policy was collected in a Communication Commission presented in March 2003. In the debate, the president of the Commission by that time, Romano Prodi, said that the new policy should aim to create a "circle of friends" where you could ultimately share “everything but institutions”. This suggestion was not accepted by the Council, but in the conclusions adopted in June 2003 the Council itself largely followed the proposals of the Commission. In late 2003, the ENP was born as we know it today, after the Rose Revolution in Georgia. A few months after this, the Council decided to include Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan in the new policy, thereafter called European Neighbourhood Policy. From this moment, the new policy would be extended to 6 Eastern countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) and 10 Southern countries (Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Israel, Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria).

Overall, the ENP aims to strengthen the stability, security and prosperity of the EU and its eastern and southern neighbours, offering them an even closer relationship. At the same time, it seeks to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours. Although such closeness will depend at all times on the commitment of these countries and the EU on common values, especially on democracy, the State of law, good governance and respect for human rights and the principles of the economy of the market, free trade, sustainable development and poverty reduction.

The ENP finally takes shape in the form of both the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements with neighbouring countries, whose principles are formulated and communicated in different Euro-Mediterranean Conferences (Table 1). The main instrument of this policy is embodied in specific action plans that, once agreed, explicit the entry into force of an association agreement or cooperation, also known as “Euromed”. In this regard, the Commission prepares a Plan of Action, then negotiates with the neighbouring country in question and must be approved by the whole governing body established under the respective “Euromed”.

**Table 1.** Euro-Mediterranean Conferences<sup>198</sup>

Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona (1995)	The Barcelona Conference was the beginning of a new phase in relations between the countries of the Mediterranean basin. This was the holding of ministerial meetings to address the major political, economic and social points of the Mediterranean countries, and began on November 28, 1995 in Barcelona, at the request of the Spanish government. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/dec_Barcelona_1995_es.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/dec_Barcelona_1995_es.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Malta (1997)	It deepened and complemented <i>The Declaration of Principles and Objectives of Barcelona</i> . Considerable progress was made in the development of the Euro-

<sup>198</sup> The translation is mine.

Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Stuttgart (1999)	Mediterranean Association, despite the complex regional situation on security policy. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Malta_1997_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Malta_1997_en.pdf</a> The Foreign Ministers meeting in Stuttgart discussed on the importance of providing stability to the Mediterranean area. The meeting discussed the development of the "Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability" and the progressive development of regional cooperation and preventive diplomacy. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Stuttgart_1999_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Stuttgart_1999_en.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Marseilles (2000)	In the French city of Marseille, The Ministers of Foreign Affairs discussed the situation in the Middle East and addressed the issue of cooperation on security policy. In regard to the economic and commercial, they reaffirmed the objective of creating a free trade area between The European Community and the Mediterranean partners. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/conf_Marsella_2000_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/conf_Marsella_2000_en.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conferencia of Valencia (2002)	The Valencia meeting marked a turning point in the Euro-Mediterranean Conferences. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs established a Plan of Action to reinforce political dialogue and economic cooperation, trade and finance. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2002_Valencia_es.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2002_Valencia_es.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Naples (2003)	In the Italian city of Naples, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs approved the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly and the Anna Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue of Cultures, in order to promote knowledge of different cultures. It was also decided to create, with the support of the European Investment Bank (EIB), a mechanism of loan designed to encourage the development of the private sector in the Mediterranean countries. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2003_Naples_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2003_Naples_en.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Luxembourg (2005)	The VII Conference allowed the representatives of governments debate on the major issues which affect the development of The Euromediterranean Partnership. Also here took place The Tenth Anniversary of the Barcelona Process. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2005_Luxemburgo_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_2005_Luxemburgo_en.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona (2005)	The Tenth Anniversary Cumbre of the Barcelona Process, known as "Barcelona +10", brought together the heads of State and Governments and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs European and Mediterranean to take an evaluation of the 10 years of the Barcelona Process and approve a work program to renovate their drive. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/state_2005_Barcelona_en.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/state_2005_Barcelona_en.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Tampere (2006)	The conference in Tampere (Finland) insists on the security issues and the creation of free trade zone. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conclusiones%20Tampere%202006_eng.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conclusiones%20Tampere%202006_eng.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Lisbon (2007)	This conference recognized the important role of the social economy in the economic and social development of the Mediterranean, through the participatory management of its members and beneficiaries in productivity, competitiveness, solidarity and social responsibility. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Lisboa2007.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/Conf_Lisboa2007.pdf</a>
Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Paris (2008)	More than forty heads of State and Governments of the EU and Mediterranean countries participated in the summit of July 13, 2008 in Paris to launch the "Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean". <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/ConfParis08.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/ConfParis08.pdf</a>
Statutes of the European Union for the Mediterranean (2010)	The Statute of the European Union for the Mediterranean was approved on March 3, 2010 in the city of Barcelona. <a href="http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/ESTATUTOS_UPM_EN.pdf">http://www.medlognews.com/archive/documents/ESTATUTOS_UPM_EN.pdf</a>

**Sources:** collection and documentation available on: [www.medlognews.com](http://www.medlognews.com); <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/>; <http://ec.europa.eu>.

In general, each Action Plan contains a number of objectives and measures that are formulated within a framework of political and economic reforms. They keep enough similarity to processes whose objective is the accession to the EU and the support to the candidate countries' reforms, setting a specific action project (Galduf Jordan, 2004).

Finally, they are also used under the ENP instruments as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the Development Cooperation Instrument on migration or the Humanitarian Aid Instrument and the Macrofinancial Assistance.

## **The Agricultural Relations Between The Eu And Morocco**

### **The Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement EU-Morocco (1996) and its impact on agriculture.**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1995 the representatives of the Council and the Commission of the European Union as well as 12 representatives of the Mediterranean countries (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority) met in the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Barcelona, in order to communicate a new framework for multilateral cooperation between them. This is an unparalleled historical event and marks a new phase in the foreign policy of the EU because, for the first time social, economic, human, cultural and security policy would be discussed. This spirit is created as the new partnership is set, mainly showing solidarity and respect for the specificities of each country and completing the former activities and initiatives undertaken in favour of peace, stability and regional development (De Arce Borde y Escribano Francés, 2001).

Between then and 2005, the EU held seven Euro-Mediterranean agreements with different Mediterranean countries. One of these would be the new Euro-Mediterranean Agreement with Morocco, signed on February 26, 1996, but would take effect on March 1, 2000, after a long process of ratification in the European Parliament. Its purpose is already expressed in art. 1 of the Decision of the Council and the Commission of 24 January 2000:

- Provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of their relations.
- Establish the conditions of progressive liberalization of trade in goods, services and capital.
- Develop trade and the development of social and economic relations between the Parties.
- Encourage the Maghreb integration by promoting trade and cooperation between Morocco and the countries of the region.
- Increase cooperation in the economic, social, cultural and financial scope.

Trade liberalization represented the core of most attention in this Agreement. The gradual introduction, in 12 years, of a Free Trade Area (FTA) was proposed and, consequently, the Moroccan market opened to the EU. This aspect was not covered in previous bilateral agreements<sup>199</sup>. Chapters II 'Free movement of goods' and III 'Common Provisions' regulate in their articles this FTA and their annexes and protocols, which reflect the specific issues concerning agricultural and fishery trade, rules of origin and customs treatment.

In general, Moroccan agricultural and fishery products, although winning concessions when compared to previous stages, benefit in this Agreement from less advantages than the industrial products, which are allowed to be imported from the European Community free of customs duties and charges of an equivalent effect (Article 9). However, in Protocols 1, 2 and 3 a series of reciprocal concessions reviewable in agriculture and fisheries are established; revisions that, according to Article 18, must be made along the same year in favour of further liberalization of these products. The binding was, in short, the total or partial reduction of *ad valorem* tariffs<sup>200</sup> on imports into the EU of products originating in Morocco. Such tariff reduction was subject, in most cases, at three types of constraints<sup>201</sup> (Moreno García, 2000:13):

1. Products for which a tariff quota is established within which the tariff concession is applied.
2. Products for which reference quantities are defined.
3. Products for which the Community reserves the right to establish a reference quantity and possibly a subsequent quota for a volume equivalent to it.

This Agreement also incorporated specific treatment for sensitive agricultural products to the Community (Table 2). In this case, the concessions were subject to input prices gradually declined at the same rate and terms of input prices consolidated before the World Trade Organization (WTO). Morocco promised not to exceed the established quotas (matter that did not happen with the tomato, for example). As for the entry of agricultural products originating from the EU in Morocco, it only

<sup>199</sup> We refer to the Association Agreement of 1969, replaced by the Global Cooperation Agreement signed on 27 April 1976 and which entered into force on 1 November 1979.

<sup>200</sup> Ad valorem tariff is a tariff that is imposed as a percentage of the value of the merchandise. For example, 5% tariff means that the import tariff is 5% of the value of the merchandise in question.

<sup>201</sup> The translation is mine.

guaranteed maximum customs duties within tariff quotas for a total of 46 line items, as set out in Protocol 3 of the Agreement.

**Table 2.** Moroccan sensitive agricultural products in the EU market

Specific treatment for certain products Moroccan by EU			
Product	Period	Quota in 1997	Input price (euro/ton)
Fresh tomato..... (0702.00)	October	500	500
	November	18.601	500
	December	36.170	500
	January	30.749	500
	February	33.091	500
	March	27.065	500
	October to March	150.676	500
Fresh Courgette ..... (0709.00)	1 <sup>st</sup> October to 20 <sup>th</sup> April	5.000	451
Artichoke..... (0709-10)	1 <sup>st</sup> November to 31 <sup>th</sup> December	500	600
Cucumbers..... (0707)	1 <sup>st</sup> November to 31 <sup>th</sup> May	5.000	500
Clementines..... (0805.20)	1 <sup>st</sup> November-At the end of February	110.000	500
Fresh oranges..... (0805.10)	1 <sup>st</sup> November-At the end of February	300.000	275
	1 <sup>st</sup> . December to 30 <sup>th</sup> May		

Source<sup>202</sup>: Moreno García, 2000.

To sum up, the EU- Mediterranean Agreement between the EU and Morocco (1996-2000) advanced in a theoretical project of free trade area of industrial, agricultural and fishery goods. In this sense, a large volume of industrial products from Morocco won the total tariff exemption from the same date, and many others would be obtained in March 2003 (Moreno García, 2000). For the other half of the industrial goods, tariff dismantling would begin in March 2003. In the agricultural sector, on the other hand, a partial liberalization was carried out, with a series of specific treatments for certain sensitive products in the productive sector of the Community.

#### **The renewal of the Agreement in 2003 and the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004).**

Among articles 16 and 18 of the Agreement of 1996 it was specified that, overall, the agreement involved a package of measures that should be extended every five years, up to the full opening of their markets and the effective creation of a free trade area in the industrial and agricultural sector. For this reason, in the Roadmap Action Plans it was foreshadowed that, in 2000, the renewal and expansion of trade-offs for these productive sectors would be negotiated.

Moreover, the European Commission prepared a mandate for the negotiation already in the spring of 2000, in order to apply the new terms in January 2001. Morocco, however, refused to negotiate until late 2002 and, when it did, it made proposals with an impossible acceptance. Finally, when it agreed to a negotiation in realistic terms, it was patiently lengthened so much that its conclusion was possible only in December 2003 (Jaso Cortés, 2004: 28). Thus, the entry into force of the new liberalization package came three years late, in early 2004.

<sup>202</sup> The translation is mine.



The content of the new agreement resulted in a new version of Protocol 3 of the previous Agreement of 1996, materializing in tariff quotas, whose total number has doubled from 45 to a total of 100 (Jordan Galduf, Garcia Alvarez-Coque and Gómez Martínez, 2011). On the other hand, preferential rights were considerably improved, whose first result was the complete disappearance of tariff quotas on a large group of products and increased volume. However, with the entry into force of the new Agreement in December 2003, Morocco was only granted a total of 156 preferences to their products, compared to 152 in 1996. And, although full liberalization remains the main instrument of the new agreement, the number of agricultural products for which was granted this power fell from 83 to 79. This change is mainly due to the non-use of the mechanism of 'Quantities of preference', which was present in 1996 (Jaso Cortés, 2004). Finally, emphasize that the fresh tomato was, again, the product that raised concerns in this Agreement for the EU farmers, because Morocco was granted a significant increase in the quota.

Spain with Morocco, for example, competes, cooperates and has a dependency on its workforce. In the case of Andalusia, and specifically the Huelva coast, recent harvests of strawberries were practically taken forward with manpower from Morocco. But once in circulation in the Community market, Huelva strawberries compete directly with the strawberries produced in Morocco. The same competition occurs with many other crops of the Andalusian coast and northern Morocco (Table 3), which has been shaping ostensible differences between "bound landscapes" and "ephemeral landscapes" (Márquez Domínguez., 2008).

**Table 3.** Harvested area in thousands of hectares

<b>Consolidated landscapes,2005</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Andalusia</b>
<b>Harvested area (1000 ha.)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>
Avocados	8.80	1.61	8.53
Apricots	19.86	12.00	0,24
Cherries	25.86	1.30	3,01
Plums and sloes	19.57	7.90	2,65
Lemons and limes	47.31	1.00	8,16
Peaches and nectarines	78.45	4.50	11,35
Oranges	135.67	48.85	44,58
Pears and quinces	37.47	7.20	1,16
Tangerines, mandarins and clementines	118.36	24.00	11,60
<b>Ephemeral Landscapes, 2005</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>Morocco</b>	<b>Andalusia</b>
Strawberries	7.60	3.14	7,31
Garlic	18.00	4.10	6,30
Artichokes	18.60	3.65	2,95
Aubergines	3.00	2.55	2,44
Pumpkins	7.00	6.78	4,74
Onions (incl. shallots)	24.60	29.60	3,85
Chillies and green peppers,	23.50	6.54	16,64
Cabbages and other cruciferous	7.70	1.70	1,49
Cauliflower and brócoli	25.40	2.02	1,40
Asparagus	12.00	0.39	7,30
Green beans	17.50	17.63	9,16
Lettuce and chicory	36.20	0.21	11,73
Other melons (including cantaloupe)	38.50	27.34	9,49
Cucumbers and gherkins	7.20	1.10	6,11
Watermelons	15.80	12.96	8,22
Tomatoes	71.90	22.10	20,22
Carrots and turnips	5.00	16.21	4,13

Source<sup>203</sup>: Márquez Domínguez., 2008: 7.

Meanwhile, the launch in 2004 of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) opened an unexplored horizon to create the promised FTA (FTA) between the EU and neighbouring countries of the Mediterranean, as this FTA was enshrined as the main objective of this new policy. Regarding Morocco, it represents its main political and economic support, whose endowment reached the figure

<sup>203</sup> The translation is mine.

of 11.9 billion euros for the period 2007-2013 under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) (Canary Islands Government, 2011). Within this new framework, and after the "Report Country-Morocco" that the European Commission presented in May 2004, the Action Plan EU-Morocco was approved in 2005, for a period of five years, Morocco became one of the first countries to sign a Neighbourhood Action Plan with the EU. In the Strategic Report for 2007-2013, including in the ENPI, the five priority areas for financial cooperation and financial share of each item are established (Table 4):

**Table 4.** Strategic priorities for financial cooperation EU-Morocco (2007-2010)

Prioridad Estratégica	% Millones de euros	Measures
Social area	45,09%	1.INDH 2.Literacy teaching 3.Education 4. Support for basic health coverage 5. Health Service
Governance Human rights	4,29%	1. Support to the Ministry of Justice 2. Human Rights
Institutional Support	6,13%	1. Public Administration Reform 2.PAPA
Economic Area	36,89%	1.Private Sector 2.Professional Education 3.Agrarian Sector 4.Rocade proyect 5.Connecting remote areas 6.Energy Sector
Environment	7,66%	1.FODEP 2. Hydric sanitation

Source<sup>204</sup>: European Neighbourhood Instrument and Partnership. Morocco Strategy Paper 2007-2013. National Indicative Programme 2007-2010.

The ENPI assumed, in addition, all territorial programs financed by the EU in the countries benefiting from the ENP, as the *Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS)*, the Community Initiative concerning trans-European cooperation to encourage the harmonious and balanced development of the European territory (INTERREG) or the Poland and Hungary program: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies (PHARE), among others. The aim is to simplify the political and administrative structures, based on principles of multi-annual programming, partnership and co-financing and aims to promote cross-border and interregional cooperation.

#### **From the granting of the Advanced Status (2008) to Morocco to the New Agricultural Agreement of 2010**

After a new Council of the EU-Morocco Association held on October 13, 2008, a joint paper or 'roadmap' was published that filled old aspirations of the Alaouite kingdom: the so-called Advanced Status. It is a new adjustment of the ENP, which provides enhanced political dialogue and the gradual integration of Morocco into the internal market of the EU. Morocco consummated his stated intention, since the entry into force of the Association Agreement of 1996, to be distinguished from the other southern Mediterranean partner countries and bilateral and asymmetric approach of the ENP launched in Brussels in 2004 (Fernandez Molina., 2010).

At the start of the preliminary negotiations of the new Statute, between 2006 and 2007, the said Action Plan of the EU and Morocco, signed in 2005, was already fully operational under the guidance of the ENP, which may explain, in part, that his "Sheet Map" provides the implementation of "short-term measures," though without any precise deadlines. In general, the Moroccan desire got extended to the European Economic Area (EEA)-free movement of goods, services, capital and

<sup>204</sup> The translation is mine.



people, and the preferential terms that were granted to the Eastern candidate countries during the pre-accession phase. Finally, this desire was only materialized in the following concrete measures agreed<sup>205</sup> (Martin, 2008):

1. Intensification of the political dialogue.
2. Actions on safety (police, border control, combating terrorism, drug trafficking and crime in general) and on the judiciary, with a Moroccan institutional and legislative alignment to EU standards.
3. The medium-term creation of a common economic space inspired in the EEA rules, which would imply, in principle, an enhanced cooperation on regulatory convergence of Morocco with the EU. Also, a Deepened and Global Free Trade Agreement is negotiated that integrates in agriculture and services and not only in industrial products, as happened in the revised agreement in 2000.
4. It promotes economic dialogue between the two partners and, perhaps most innovative: a dialogue on employment, decent work and social affairs.
5. In the area of infrastructure a connection from Morocco to the major European networks of transport, communications and energy is expected.
6. Regarding agriculture, mining, environment and water, it promotes cooperation activities that complement the Moroccan regulatory convergence in each of these areas.
7. At the institutional level, it provides the participation of Morocco in a number of European agencies.
8. However, it is clearly established that the limits of the action of the EU, committed for such purposes, are already fixed in the Financial Perspectives of the Framework 2007-2013, establishing therefore the only short-term concession "optimization of new instruments and thematic programs".

Agriculture is very present in this Advanced Status, though not without some ambiguity. Considerations mostly revolve around Moroccan agricultural modernization, agreeing the following actions<sup>206</sup> (EU Document conjoint sur le Maroc renforcement des bilateral relations / Statut advance, 2008: 9-10):

1. Accelerate the implementation of actions to improve the Action Plan in the agricultural sector in order to achieve the creation of a transparent system with harmonized regulatory standards.
2. Support to the strategy for improving the Moroccan agriculture that was established in the "Green Morocco Plan" (2008), which aims to balance the agricultural activity in all economic activities of the country and support the entry of agricultural production in the world market and the markets of Morocco's main partners. This support may be provided through the organization of courses, capacity building, sanitary and phytosanitary standards, alignment with current regulations, sustainable resource management, etc., always under the existing cooperation mechanisms.
3. The collaboration between organizations of professional Moroccan producers and their European counterparts.
4. Establishing a system of recognition and articulation joint Moroccan and European geographical indications.

The ambiguity of this Advanced Status in agriculture is that<sup>207</sup>:

Not a single mention is done of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or Morocco's participation in it, even in the long term, and, with respect to the opening of the European agricultural markets to Moroccan products, is left to the negotiations that were already in progress within the framework of the upcoming Partnership Agreement, without providing even a step further (Martin, 2008: 5).

Despite this apparent ambiguity, EU-Morocco relations on agriculture has intensified greatly after the granting of the Advanced Statute, especially regarding exports to the EU of certain Moroccan products. Recently, in 2009, they began to negotiate an Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters concerning reciprocal liberalization measures on agricultural products, processed agricultural products, fish and fishery products, which replaced Protocols 1, 2 and 3 of the Agricultural Agreement of 2003 and amended the Euro-Mediterranean Agreement of 1996 considerably.

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<sup>205</sup> The translation is mine.

<sup>206</sup> The translation is mine.

<sup>207</sup> Idem.

This new agreement would be signed on 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 2010 and finally ratified in February 2012 and entered into force the 1st of October. In general, it implies the practical liberalization of fruit and vegetable exports to the EU market from Morocco. Specifically, the Protocol abolishes the "*ad valorem* rights" for all fruits and vegetables, except tomatoes, garlicks, cucumbers, courgettes, tangerines and pears. For these products, tariff protection is also lower than the previous agreement. Similarly, the *ad valorem* rights are reduced by setting quotas with zero tariff and reductions above the quota, which are 60% for tomatoes and 80% for unlimited amounts of clementines. Finally, the great benefit for Morocco is related to the input prices, because the Agreement sets new concessions on products with reduced input prices and unlimited amounts, such as table grapes, apricots, peaches and nectarines.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that this new agreement has received strong opposition from the farming community, especially the Spanish one. The critics primarily focus on the weak phytosanitary requirements imposed to Moroccan products to come into the European markets, especially when we compare them with any community horticultural products. Consequently, most industrialized EU countries benefit the most from this agreement, because due to the liberalization of the agricultural trade with Morocco, they get to export their industrial products to Morocco at low tariffs.

### **Final conclusions**

The institutional framework of the EU-Morocco cooperation on agriculture reveals, above all, the intense diplomatic, political and economic relations that both entities have been starring in decades.

The territorial, environmental and political contrasts in which Moroccan agricultural activities is being developed explain much of the internal weaknesses of this industry and, consequently, the need for foreign aid. The fact is that we are dealing with an economy in which the agricultural activity represents a significant 15% of the national GDP, to which must be added an uncompetitive industrial sector and a strong hidden economy. It is, in short, an unsteady subsistence economy, due to the fact that it is based essentially on agriculture, informal employment and the need of financial aid from abroad.

The EU is the main export destination for Moroccan fruit and vegetable products. For this reason the majority of signed agreements have essential impact on the agricultural Alaouite sector. From 1996 to the present, or, which is the same, from the first EU-Morocco Euro-Mediterranean Agreement to the new Agricultural Agreement ratified in February 2010, Moroccan agricultural products have been progressively liberalized until its practical immersion in a less theoretical European Free Trade Area. However, it is true that for certain sensitive products for the EU market (tomatoes, cucumbers, oranges, etc.) some protectionism is still practiced, in order to maintain the difficult balance between the producers of community countries and regions and the producers of neighbouring countries.

However, the most resistant political and legal limits for the Moroccan agriculture are carried out from the Common Agricultural Policy Agreements. None of it makes any reference to a hypothetical participation of Morocco in this policy. The reason seems obvious when one considers that Morocco is not an EU country. But this obvious fact conflicts with the intent of creating a Free Trade Area between the EU and Morocco, which partly explains the ambiguity that still permeates the agricultural agreements made.

Therefore, there is still no real Free Trade Agreement between the EU and Morocco. Although scholars have attributed the cause to the Moroccan sociopolitical structure, it may be due instead to the lack of interest of both authorities. However, this gap does not detract from diplomatic and political efforts subsumed and materialized in the shape of these agreements, with special incidence in agriculture, but it reminds us and suggests the long road that is still ahead for Morocco to internationalize their agricultural production and improve their performance and production structure.

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